



PSC Water Currents

The water conservation and efficiency newsletter of the
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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In This Issue

[PSC and DNR Release Summary Reports on Wisconsin Water Use](#)

[Wisconsin Public Utility Institute to Host Forum on Water System Management](#)

[Oconomowoc Public Utilities Receives Water Efficiency Award](#)

[News from WaterSense](#)

[Sign Up for Water Loss Control Webinar](#)

PSC and DNR Release Summary Reports on Wisconsin Water Use

In mid-September, both the Public Service Commission and the Department of Natural Resources released summary reports of important information regarding water use in Wisconsin. The PSC's [Water Fact Sheet](#) compiles data from the financial reports public water utilities are required to file with the PSC annually. DNR's [Wisconsin Water Use report](#) is based on data collected in conjunction with the agency's Water Use Reporting Program that tracks water withdrawals for all properties with high capacity wells, properties that withdraw 100,000 gallons per day or more in any thirty day period, surface water withdrawals permitted under Wis. Stats. Chapter 30, and Great Lakes basin properties holding a water use permit.

According to the PSC Fact Sheet, Wisconsin public water utilities sold 153 billion gallons of water to retail customers in 2012. Total water sales increased by just over 4 percent between 2011 and 2012, due in part to increased outdoor water use during last year's drought conditions. In 2012, the average volume of water sold per residential meter was 55,100 gallons, which is nearly 6 percent less than in 2007, even with the unusually hot and dry conditions last summer. As of February 2013, the average quarterly cost for 18,750 gallons of water was \$86.59 for residential customers, or \$4.62 per 1,000 gallons. Statewide average water rates rose

2.4 percent over 2012 rates due to rising operating costs and necessary investments in infrastructure.

Municipal water systems accounted for nine percent of the 2.25 trillion gallons of water withdrawn from the state's surface and groundwater resources in 2012. According to DNR's permit data, total statewide 2012 withdrawals were up 4.8 percent from 2011. While withdrawals associated with power production declined, withdrawals for irrigation and cranberry production increased dramatically in 2012. Power generation comprised the greatest percentage of surface water withdrawn, while agricultural irrigation represented the largest use of groundwater in the state, surpassing municipal supply withdrawals for the first time.

Wisconsin Public Utility Institute to Host Forum on Water System Management

On October 17, 2013, the Wisconsin Public Utility Institute (WPUI) will host a forum entitled "Water System Management and Decision-Making: Is it Time for Change?" The roundtable will address options for meeting the challenge of rising costs associated with any number of issues now facing an aging water system infrastructure and will provide national and statewide perspectives. This event is designed to provide a starting point for a discussion of how water system management should look in the 21st century and how it can best meet growing public health and economic needs.

The roundtable will take place at the University of Wisconsin Madison's Pyle Center from 8:15 - 4:00. Those interested in participating can find more information at:

<http://wpui.wisc.edu/?p=2492> or by contacting Cara Lee Mahany Braithwait at WPUI at samb@wpui.org or by calling 608-890-1815.

Oconomowoc Public Utilities Receives Water Efficiency Award

At its 2013 annual conference, the Wisconsin Water Association (WWA) recognized the City of Oconomowoc Public Utilities for its achievements in promoting the wise use of water resources through water conservation and efficiency. Since 2008, the Utility has been making strategic decisions that resulted in implementation of initiatives geared toward water efficiency and conservation. Practical and pragmatic leadership from Utility managers and elected officials, coupled with the Utility and City staff's commitment to championing conservation activities and public education led to many successful programs and projects. The Utility leveraged key partnerships within the local business, environmental, and school communities to achieve these successes, which include implementation of an AMR metering system and SCADA upgrade, an "Energy and Water Workshop," a reduced price rain barrel sale, a "Find the Painted Rain Barrel" contest, numerous water conservation talks to multiple community organizations, and other programs. Not an organization to rest on its laurels, the Utility has proposed a Community Water Challenge for 2014. Congratulations to Oconomowoc Public Utilities for its accomplishments.

News from WaterSense

The WaterSense program has been busy over the past several months, with new initiatives in several important areas. Late this summer, WaterSense released specifications for pre-rinse spray valves kitchens often used often used in commercial and institutional to remove food waste from dishes prior to dishwashing. The federal standard for commercial pre-rinse spray valves is 1.6 gallons per minute (gpm), but manufacturers have now developed models that use significantly less water. EPA's specification sets the maximum flow rate for WaterSense labeled pre-rinse spray valves at 1.28 gpm, or 20 percent less water than the federal standard, and includes spray force criteria and lifecycle testing to ensure performance in commercial kitchens. WaterSense labeled pre-rinse spray valves are independently certified to ensure efficient cleaning while using less water. EPA estimates that replacing one pre-rinse spray valve with WaterSense labeled model can save a typical commercial kitchen more than 7,000 gallons of water per year. That's equivalent to the amount of water needed to wash nearly 5,000 racks of dishes. Because kitchens use hot water to rinse dishes, installing a WaterSense labeled pre-rinse spray valve can reduce a commercial kitchen's annual natural gas use by more than 6,400 cubic feet per year. That's enough energy to run its convection oven 12 hours a day for three weeks. These water, natural gas and electricity savings translate to a potential savings of \$115 to \$240 per year for a commercial kitchen that replaces one pre-rinse spray valve with a WaterSense labeled model. The facility could see payback on its investment in as little as four to eight months. For more information on WaterSense labeled pre-rinse spray valves, see <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/products/prsv.html>.

In another endeavor to help increase water efficiency in the commercial and institutional sectors, EPA announced its intent to develop a WaterSense specification for flushometer-valve toilets. With this announcement, EPA is releasing a Notice of Intent (NOI) that describes the efficiency and performance criteria WaterSense is considering. EPA is interested in getting input on its draft specification, as well as the technical issues that still need to be more fully defined and resolved. If you and/or your organization have comments or suggestions, contact watersense-products@epa.gov.

In addition to the news on new product certifications, WaterSense is sponsoring its second annual Shower Better campaign to help celebrate October's Energy Awareness month. Shower Better focuses on promoting WaterSense labeled showerheads as a way for consumers to enjoy a satisfying shower while saving water, energy, and money. The simple act of replacing an old showerhead with a WaterSense labeled model can reduce the average family's annual water use by 2,900 gallons, save more than \$70 per year in energy and water costs, and conserve the amount of energy needed to power a home for 13 days every year. If your utility or community organization is interested in participating in this campaign, the [WaterSense partner website](#) provides access to infographics, bill stuffers, cards to accompany showerhead giveaways, sample social media posts, and an updated "Drops to Watts" brochure that explains the energy-water saving nexus of WaterSense labeled showerheads and other products.

Sign Up for Water Loss Control Webinar

On November 7, from noon to 1:00 CST, the Illinois Section of AWWA is hosting a webinar entitled "Water Loss Control Triumphs: A Peer-to-Peer Storytelling Series." The November session is a first in a series of webinars designed to let participants hear how peers from across the country and region have managed water loss successfully. George Kunkel, Water Efficiency Program Manager for the Philadelphia Water Department, and chair of AWWA's Water Loss Control Committee, will describe Philadelphia's successful water loss control initiative. This webinar is worth .5 Professional Development Hours for engineers as well as Renewal Training Credit hours for water operators. Registration is free for Wisconsin Water Association members and is available on the Illinois Section website at the [IAWWA website](#). For more information, contact 866-521-3595, Extension 3.

About this newsletter

Water Currents is published by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Denise Schmidt, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 266-1282.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to [Denise Schmidt](#). Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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